



By Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post

Louisiana delegation headed by Rep. Joe Waggoner, talking to President Nixon, and Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, left of Mr. Nixon, presents petitions of support.

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Petitions Support President

Southerners Bid Nixon Stay

Associated Press

Vowing "I'll be here for three more years," President Nixon accepted gestures of Southern support yesterday in his administration's current troubles.

In an Oval Office ceremony, petitions bearing 46,000 signatures from Shreveport and Bossier City, La., were presented to the President. He responded, "the fact that these petitions come from the Democratic South makes it the best Christmas present I could have."

Rep. Joe Waggoner (D-La.)

headed the delegation and told Mr. Nixon the petitions represented "a bipartisan outpouring of sentiment for you and your office."

"You can tell every one of these 46,000 that I'll be here for three more years," Mr. Nixon said, gesturing at the petitions stacked on his desk.

During the ceremony, one member of the delegation, Dorothy Cathey, wife of the Democratic mayor of Bossier City, wept quietly but openly.

A few moments earlier, the President had met with country and western entertainer Tex Ritter, who gave him a

special album titled, "Thank you, Mr. President."

The album is composed of excerpts from Mr. Nixon's speeches, with Ritter narrating.

White House officials said only two copies of the recording had been made—one for presentation to Mr. Nixon and the other to be preserved in the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tenn.

Ritter thanked Mr. Nixon for his contributions to the music industry, saying, "you're the first President to be so kind to our industry."